



CATAWBA COUNTY

3070 11th Ave. Dr. SE - Hickory, NC 28602 - (828) 695-5800 - Fax (828) 695-4410 - TDD (828) 695-5155

Public Health

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Ozone Awareness

Summer days and nights seem to bring heat that can make anyone wish for a pool or a cold drink of water. Many people have heard that the sun can have damaging effects on a person's body. Did you know that ozone emissions can be just as harmful? The ozone is the protective layer around the earth but in the form of ground level ozone, it creates harmful pollutants that affect everyone's health.

Two groups of people who are most vulnerable to the effects of high ozone levels are the young and elderly. Those who spend extended periods of time outside can also experience difficulty breathing and eye irritation.

Another group that has a difficult time with higher levels of ozone are individuals with respiratory illnesses such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease also known as COPD. Ozone can trigger symptoms and cause someone to have an asthma attack.

With outdoor sports, coaches should be aware of the toll that temperature and ozone levels take on athletes. Athletes should take water breaks often and practice in the early morning and late afternoon when temperatures are at their lowest. Any player who has asthma should make their coach aware so that they can monitor their health during practice and games.

In order to protect your health you should be aware of air quality levels and limit the amount of time that you are outdoors and how hard you work while outdoors accordingly. You should plan your activities in the early morning or the evening when ozone levels are at their lowest.

The Air Quality Index is divided into five color coded categories to help people identify the level of action needed.

Air Quality Index (AQI)

Color Code	AQI	Air Quality Description
Green	0-50	Good
Yellow	51-100	Moderate
Orange	101-150	Unhealthy for sensitive groups
Red	151-200	Unhealthy
Purple	201-300	Very Unhealthy



"Leading the Way to a Healthier Community"
www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth





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“We all have a part to play in reducing ozone emissions. People should pay attention to the Air Quality Index. If they notice a day above orange they should take extra precautions,” explained Tracey Paul, Health Promotion Coordinator with Catawba County Public Health.

On Air Quality Action Days, you should:

- Refuel cars and trucks after dusk when emissions are less likely to produce ozone.
- Delay using gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment until air quality is healthy again.
- Delay using household, workshop, and garden chemicals until air quality is healthy again.

To learn more about ozone please visit www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth or the North Carolina Division of Air Quality at www.daq.state.nc.us/.



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